



Should Irishmen Be Conscripted?.

An Historical Account
of the Volunteers of 1782
showing how Concessions
were wrung from a tyrann-
ical majority by a Nation
in Arms.



No. 1. **McGLENNON'S IRISH HANDBOOKS.**

SHOULD IRISHMEN BE CONSCRIPTED?

By **E R G O.**

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By E R G O.

CHAPTER I.

For the first time in her modern history England was involved in a righteous war.

It was a new experience for her to be at war—not for conquest—not for territory—not to punish those who objected to her rule or to further crush disaffection—but for “Freedom.”

That blessed word “Freedom!” How quickly it ran round the purblind British Press! How enthusiastically they declared the necessity of protecting the rights of small nationalities, all the world over—always excepting England’s eternal problem, Ireland.

The British Public took up the cry with cheerful alacrity. They usually take their Political Education from their morning or evening newspapers. They do not stop to think or analyse. The policy of their favourite journal may wobble and right-about-face from time to time, but, the British Public are faithful followers.

A great wave of patriotism surged over the country, and in a short time a huge army was in being—an army destined to change the map of Europe, to create new ideals, to give a new rendering to the word Freedom, and to abolish, once and for all, the caste system that for so long held the English de vocracy in thrall.

No less enthusiastic were the Irish in Great Britain. The members of the Irish Parliamentary Party travelled North, South, East and West, exhorting their followers to join the Colours, and Mr. John Redmond publicly announced that no less than half a million Irishmen had enlisted in Great Britain:

Students of Irish history who know the causes of the mistrust of English policy, deep down in the hearts of the Irish race, were amazed at the magnanimous revulsion of feeling displayed by the Irish democracy in Great Britain. They were also profoundly moved by the sound statesmanship displayed by the Irish Leaders.

“The Dollar King,” as a recruiting agent for the British Army was an amazing sight, but, Mr. John Redmond was indifferent to the adulation of the British Press as he previously had been to their mud-slinging. He saw, with the keen insight of the Celt, that in a war for Freedom, the fighting race had a cause worthy of them, whether the uniform they wore was Rebel Green, Felon Stripes, or British Khaki.

After a time the Voluntary system of recruiting apparently failed to find sufficient material to keep the Army up to the constantly increasing standard, and Conscription became necessary in Great Britain.

A certain section of the British Press began to decry the proportion of men who had joined the Colours in Ireland. They knew that, as a result of English misgovernment, Ireland had been depopulated to a great extent of her young manhood. They knew that Ireland was now, more than ever, the larder for the British Isles, and that in an agricultural country there could be only a very small proportion of fit men who could be spared without

gravely imperilling the production of food for the British military and civil population. They also knew that the blessings (?) of British Rule were not appreciated by many of the Irish people, but, nevertheless, taunting references in anti-Irish journals became frequent. The ever-ready chorus of their unthinking and unreasoning readers volubly repeated the taunts, and an insistent demand for Conscription in Ireland became the fashion.

Mr. John Redmond unhesitatingly declared against Conscription in Ireland. He knew that the Irish race could be led by a silken thread of love, but, could not be forced by the strongest cable over forged.

The silken thread of love had been denied or delayed time after time until the heart of Ireland had grown weary and had almost despaired of what should be the aim of every Englishman who loves his Country and Freedom, viz., a Union of Hearts and not a Union of Chains.

The strength of the Chain of Empire is measured by the weakest link. The weakest link is Ireland, and it can only be strengthened by a full recognition of Irish Nationality. As an equal partner in a Commonwealth of Free Nations Ireland may learn to forgive.

The Irish race in every British Colony, in the United States, and in every country the wide world over have shown what Irish brains and Irish energy can do when fostered by free environment; and the Irish race in amity with the English race can do much for the solidarity of the Empire.

"Should Irishmen be conscripted?" became a very burning question. The British whose fathers and sons had been forced from their comfortable homes and lucrative businesses by unsympathetic tribunals, the privileged classes who had been routed out of their Civil Service and other "soft job" shelters, the shopkeepers who had to sacrifice their goodwills, the great British Democracy hitherto friendly to Irish national progress, all joined in the cry, and the hearts of the British friends of Ireland grew cold at the apparent shirking of a great Imperial duty by Young Ireland.

In this hour of difficulty and danger they hailed Pat as a brother. "Stand by our side," said they, "and help us to protect our glorious Empire."

They did not choose to remember that our glorious Empire had been built in blood and tears, that as far as Irishmen were concerned the bud of brotherhood was of very recent growth in Imperial politics, and that Ireland was still waiting to see if it would blossom or fall sterile.

The Treaty of Reconciliation and Reparation was on the Statute Book. Why was its fulfilment delayed? Ireland with a keen recollection of previous broken treaties was suspicious, and justly so.

There is not the slightest doubt that if Ireland had had the management of her own affairs at this period, if young Irishmen had realised that the Green Isle was a co-partner in the Empire, if an Irish Parliament had been in being, there would have been no necessity to propose Conscription. Irishmen in Ireland, in the Colonies, in America, and from every corner of the earth, fit and

keen for fighting, would have flocked to the Colours in their millions, and it would not have been necessary for England to rake in the physically unfit.

But the golden opportunity was allowed to pass, the psychological moment came and went, and Young Ireland became obdurate. The Irish Leader's words fell on unresponsive ears. He had led them to the gates of Paradise and the gates had been slammed in their faces. Why?

Would Conscription in Ireland have been a blessing or a curse?

I hold that it is a national duty for every young Irishman to learn the use of arms, to learn all that can be learned of military routine, tactics and strategy, either in the British Army or elsewhere—to emphasise this point of view I would take them back to an epoch when a nation in arms wrested from England some measure of justice.

Ireland in 1782 was a nation in arms. Her citizens armed themselves, not for aggressive purposes, or out of any disloyalty to the British connection or the Throne.

England was engaged in a Continental war, and Ireland was threatened with invasion by England's foes. Ireland appealed for troops to protect her from invasion, and England had to admit her complete inability to send any troops except "invalids."

Faced with this crisis Irishmen united, and patriotically formed "The Irish Volunteers," fully armed and equipped at their own expense.

When the crisis of invasion had passed, "The Irish Volunteers" demanded and obtained from English officialdom certain much-needed rights, as will be shown in the following chapter.

I would also point out to my English friends that Official England is much the same now as it was then, impervious to reason or argument, but, keenly alive to a display of physical force.

When the English Democracy awakes to this fact many reforms will be secured by peaceful and constitutional means providing that the power of National Force is there. A democracy prepared to fight for its rights will obtain them.

CHAPTER II.

The American "Stamp Act" had been passed in 1765, just while the Irish Parliament was in the midst of its struggle for limited Parliaments and against the pension list. The next year the Stamp Act had been repealed, but had been soon followed by the attempt to impose "port duties." The steady organised resistance of the Americans had caused the British Ministry to relinquish these port duties also, except the duty on tea, in the year 1770. The question between the Mother Country and the Colonies being thus reduced to a matter of threepence per pound on tea, the colonists being once aroused, having laid down the principle, "No taxation without representation," would not pay that threepence. A year after Lord Harcourt came to Ireland as Viceroy, the people of Boston emptied a cargo of taxed tea into

the harbour of that port.

It was evident that the last resort of war had nearly arrived; and the very strong analogies which existed between the American colonies and Ireland were quite sufficient to occasion in the latter country not only an intense interest, but a deep sympathy also in the American struggle. The situation of the two countries was not indeed precisely alike. The North American colonies had never pretended to be a kingdom, as the English colony in Ireland did. Ireland was not taxed absolutely without representation, although the dependent position of her Parliament, under Poyning's Law, made her representation quite illusory for any efficient security. The American colonists were then about three millions in number; the Irish only half a million—for the two millions of Catholics were not counted as members of the body politic. Ireland was within easy reach and striking distance of the common enemy, and America was divided from her by three thousand miles of ocean—no trifling advantage in the days when steam navigation was not. Above all, America had this one great and signal advantage over Ireland, that the colonists, though of different religions, were all equal before the law, and felt themselves equally concerned in the common interest. They were also all armed and accustomed to the use of weapons, while in Ireland the penal laws had effectually disarmed and reduced to a state of utter helplessness four-fifths of the entire population.

There was, however, quite sufficient resemblance between the cases of the two countries to disquiet Lord North's administration very considerably.

Meanwhile the dispute with America was very fast approaching the arbitrament of war. The first general Congress had been opened in Philadelphia on the 4th of September, 1774. All eyes in Ireland were turned to this impending struggle, and the obvious community of interest which Ireland had with those Transatlantic colonies made their case the theme of conversation in private circles, as well as of debates in Parliament.

But, strong as was the sympathy between Ireland and America, and earnestly as the mass of the people—both Catholic and Protestant—wished success to the patriotic colonists, the Government was determined to place the two oppressed countries as far as possible in a position of, at least, apparent antagonism. With this view, Lord Harcourt, in the year 1775—just as hostilities had commenced at Lexington—demanded the services of four thousand men, out of the twelve thousand which then constituted the effective force of regular troops in Ireland, to be dispatched to America, for duty there. At the same time, the lord-lieutenant said it was his gracious Majesty's intention to supply the place of the four thousand men with foreign Protestant soldiers—in short, with Hessians. The Court party, which was now, on most questions, irresistible (though there were *reserved* questions, as the origination of money-bills), carried the measure for granting the four thousand men, on the terms that they should not be a charge to the Irish revenue while serving abroad. There was much objection made by the Patriots, to sending these troops "to cut the throats of the Americans"; and there were many expressions of sympathy and respect towards the colonists, in the course

of the debate; but the measure was carried.

But although the Irish Parliament gave these troops, it would not accept the Hessians. Much to the surprise and embarrassment of Government, the second proposition for introducing foreign troops into that kingdom was negatived by nearly as large a majority as the first was carried; namely, by 106 against 68. The House, accordingly, voted an address to his excellency, expressive of their sense and resolution upon this subject, and stating "that, with the assistance of the Government, his Majesty's loyal people of Ireland may be able so to exert themselves as to make such aid at this juncture unnecessary." This conduct of the Irish Commons is of singular importance in the History of Ireland, inasmuch as it was the first patriotic step taken by the representatives of the people towards attaining that state of civil liberty which was obtained by the nation in what Mr. Burke called "their revolution of 1782." In truth, the address to Lord Harcourt, in which the legislature promised for the people that they would *exert themselves*, and make foreign soldiers unnecessary, already distinctly foreshadowed the volunteering.

The remainder of Lord Harcourt's administration was occupied mainly with parliamentary troubles about money bills. Heads of a bill were sent to England, granting certain duties for the public service. The bill was altered by the Privy Council, and when it came back was rejected on that express ground. The Patriotic party, then, finding themselves supported on these financial questions by several members on the opposite side of the House, determined to try their strength upon a motion for an address to the King, setting forth in candid and striking terms the unhappy state of the nation. This motion was made two days before the end of the session. The address, after the usual preamble declaring loyal duty and devotion, stated that at the close of the last war the debt of the nation did not exceed £521,161 16s. 6d.: that after a peace of ten years the debt was found to be £994,890 10s. 10d.—"a circumstance so alarming and insupportable to his people, that they determined with one voice to put an end to the pernicious practice of accumulating debts, and they thought it their duty to accomplish that necessary end by first endeavouring to raise the revenue of the kingdom to an equality with the establishment." They said that economy was promised; that there had been no economy, but a continual increase in the expenses. They added, that could they neglect the most essential interests of themselves, their constituents, and their posterity, still their duty to his Majesty would prevent them from suffering the resources of his Majesty's power and dignity to dwindle and decay; and that they were the more necessitated to make that earnest application, because the evils they suffered were not temporary or occasional; because they could not attribute them to any physical evil, or proud national exertion, but to a silent, wasting, and invisible cause, which had injured the people, without adding strength to the crown. That they therefore performed that indispensable duty of laying their distresses at the foot of the throne, that history might not report them a nation which in the midst of peace, and under a gracious King, equally ready to warn and relieve, proceeded deliberately to their own ruin, without one to

appeal to the wisdom which would have redressed them. And so they appealed from the temporary expedients of his Majesty's Ministers to his own wisdom and virtues, and to that permanent interest which his Majesty had, and ever would have, in the welfare of his people.

This address was extremely respectful, even to servility. But though it did not mention the exorbitant pension-list, nor the universal corruption and bribery which then were carried on by means of the public money, it told too much truth, and was too undeniable to be endured. Therefore the Government made a point of defeating it, and succeeded. An address was carried in its place, thanking the lord lieutenant "for his prudent, just, and wise administration."

The first Octennial Parliament had scarcely lived four years, when the British cabinet found it expedient that it should be dissolved. The Parliament had, during the last session, in two instances opposed their mandates, and when summoned to attend the House of Peers, the Commons, through their Speaker, made a just but ungracious and ineffectual representation of the state of that nation. These symptoms of independence alarmed the Government, and created a diffidence in the steadiness of those who had enlisted under their banners. They looked to more steady submission in a future Parliament; and dissolved the present. Mr. Perry was re-elected Speaker by a majority of 141 to 98. The lord-lieutenant did not meet the new Parliament, which was convened in June, 1776, *pro forma*, and by several prorogations went over to the 14th of October, 1777. This Parliament now dissolved is memorable for ever in the history of Ireland for the first appearance of one of the greatest patriots who ever rose for the salvation of any people—Henry Grattan. He was the descendant of a powerful and influential family, of whom Dean Swift said, "the Grattans can raise ten thousand men." His father was recorder of Dublin. Henry Grattan entered Parliament as member for Lord Charlemont's borough of Charlemont, on the borders of Armagh and Tyrone; he was then under thirty years of age and in his first Parliament had been modest and retiring, acquainting himself with the details of public business and with the forms of the House. It was not until the meeting of the new Parliament, under the administration of Lord Buckinghamshire, that Grattan's lofty character and splendid genius became known to his countrymen and to the world.

The British cabinet was little satisfied with the administration of Lord Harcourt; the easy and delicate turn of his mind ill qualified him to support, much less to improve upon, the system of his predecessor, but by which alone, to the infamy and misfortune of Ireland, the legislators of that kingdom were to be kept steady in their ranks under the command of the Castle. Although Government, upon the whole, still retained a majority, yet several of their adherents had occasionally, during the last session, proved recreant from their instructions; some had deserted their ranks, many amongst them wavered, menaced, and complained of the terms of their engagements. It was therefore resolved to invigorate the new system by the election of a new Parliament. For this purpose an unusual, and till that time unprecedented, number of

promotions in the peerage took place in one day. It far exceeded the famous promotion of twelve in the days of Queen Anne. Five viscounts were advanced to earldoms, and eighteen new barons were created in the same day. The usual terms of such modern peerages are well understood to be an engagement to support the cause of their promoters by their individual votes in the House of Peers, and by those of their substitutes in the House of Commons, whose seats are usually settled and arranged before they vacate them upon their promotions. In short, every possible precaution was adopted to secure a subservient Irish Parliament in the crisis which had been created by the American war. But in the very month of October, in which the new viceroy, Lord Buckinghamshire, met the new Parliament, General Burgoyne was surrendering his army of 7,000 men to the Americans at Saratoga. The next year France declared for America. The administration, therefore, of this new lord-lieutenant dates a new era in the history of Ireland and of the earth. The English colony in Ireland suddenly, and for a short time, takes the proportions of a nation.

The earlier years of Lord Buckingham's viceroyalty were not marked by any very striking event much different from the routine of Parliamentary business during the preceding administrations. When this nobleman assumed the reins of government the country was still suffering the most poignant distress; while the national debt and all public charges were accumulating. Petitions now poured into both Houses, representing the sad facts with regard to declining trade. As these petitions certainly stated the truth, they are really valuable historical documents, illustrative of the period.

Thus, a petition was presented to the House of Commons from the merchants and traders of Cork, setting forth that about the month of November, 1770, an embargo was laid on all ships laden with provisions, and bound from Ireland to foreign countries, which was still continued by the Government, and had been very strictly enforced: that in consequence of that long embargo, an extensive beneficial trade, carried on for several years by that kingdom to France, Spain, Portugal, and Holland, for the supply of provisions, had been not only interrupted, but was in danger of being entirely lost; the petitioners being informed that the merchants of these countries were respectively stocked and provided from Russia, Sweden, Denmark, and Hamburg, whereby the usual returns to that kingdom were discontinued, new enemies to our commerce were raised, and our commodities rendered useless and unprofitable. That great quantities of salt beef, not fit for the use of Government or the sugar colonies, being made up in that city, and also great quantities of beef and butter being annually brought to that market, these commodities of a perishable nature were there decaying for want of a free export, to the great injury of the proprietors in particular, and of the kingdom in general. That in support of these assertions, there then remained on hand, since the preceding year, a very considerable quantity of provisions, the property of several merchants in that city, not wanted by Government, and therefore without opportunity of sale; and although a considerable part of the season in which those articles were made up, and exported had already elapsed, no demand what-

soever then existed for them, except for such quantities as were required by Government alone. That his Majesty's revenue, which before had received large and constant supplies from the customs of the city of Cork, had decreased in proportion to the decay of their trade. That the embargo, therefore, at that time not being warranted by any great substantial necessity, but, on the contrary, restraining and preventing the diffusion of trade, was pregnant with the most ruinous consequences, not only to the commercial, but also to the landed interests of the nation; and therefore the petitioners prayed redress.

The Dublin manufacturers, in their petition, had a still sadder narrative to give. For example, they declared that there were at that moment no fewer than twenty thousand persons in that one city, artisans, out of work, together with their families, whom relief association established among themselves; nor was Government able to make grants, either to promote industry or to relieve the national calamities. Every branch of the revenue failed, and such was the poverty of the nation, that the militia law could not be carried into effect. Ireland could not pay her forces abroad, and was obliged to borrow money from England to pay those at home. The Parliament was necessitated to raise money at an exorbitant interest; the expenses in 1777 having amounted to above £80,000 more than the revenue: £166,000 were therefore borrowed, and attempted to be raised in the old manner upon debentures at £4 per cent.

So truly desperate was the financial state of Ireland, that, like desponding bankrupts, the Commons undertook to grant what they knew they had not the means of paying. Even the Ministerial party could not be blind to their situation. They would not, however, permit any question to be brought forward on the state of the country in the Commons, lest too strong resolutions upon it should be carried, or their opposition to them should appear even too rank for their own system. They accordingly had again recourse to the half-measure of conveying their imperfect sense of the distressful state of the country through their Speaker, who, in presenting the first four money bills passed in that session, addressed himself to the lord-lieutenant in very general terms, expressing the unbounded confidence of the House in his Majesty's wisdom, justice, and paternal care, and relying on the viceroy's "candour and humanity to make a faithful representation to his Majesty of their unshaken loyalty, duty and affection."

Thus the pitiful and hopeless contest went on upon these questions of the money bills, the pension list, and general extravagance of Government. The Patriots saw well that they could not now hope to carry any really important measure, resolution, or address, that should be distasteful to the Castle. Yet they resolved to put on record, at least once in each session, their own theory of the evils of the country. Therefore, after the speech of the lord-lieutenant, a motion was made for a humble address to his Majesty setting forth that the civil list had doubled in twenty years; that one great cause was "the rapid and astonishing growth of the pension list"; that Ministers had repeatedly promised retrenchment, but had, on the contrary, continually increased their demands, and other like topics. This address was negatived by

a majority of 77—so well drilled were the Ministerial members.

The alarming news of the French alliance with the Americans was communicated to Parliament by the lord-lieutenant, in a special message; and this was instantly followed by a demand of a new loan of £30,000 at six per cent. A few days after, came a new message, to apprise them that the loan (which they had at once voted to raise) could not be effected at six per cent., and to demand further action upon their part. Thus, as the American war was drawing to a close, Ireland had neither money nor credit—was absolutely ruled by placeholders and pensioners, and was made to contribute her last shilling and contract further debt, to defeat and ruin a cause which nine-tenths of her people felt to be Ireland's own cause as well as America's.

In the meantime the Irish Parliament, in its session of 1778, had passed a " militia bill," to authorize the formation of volunteer forces for defence of the country. French and American privateers were sweeping the seas and the British channel; the wide extent of the Irish coast was left exposed without defence, and there began to be very general alarm in the seaport towns.

The volunteering began at Belfast. In August, 1778, the people of that town were alarmed by stories of privateers hovering near: they remembered their imminent peril at the time of Thurot's expedition, and at once began to organize and arm volunteer companies, as they had done before on that memorable occasion. At the same time the " sovereign " of the town, Mr. Stewart Burke, wrote to the Irish Secretary, urging that some troops should be sent down. He received this answer—

" DUBLIN CASTLE, August 14, 1778.

" Sir, —My Lord-Lieutenant having received information that there is reason to apprehend that three or four privateers in company may in a few days make attempts on the northern coasts of this kingdom; by his excellency's command, I give you the earliest account thereof, in order that there may be a careful watch, and immediate intelligence given to the inhabitants of Belfast, in case any party from such ships should attempt to land.

" The greatest part of the troops being encamped near Clonmel and Kinsale, his excellency can at present send no further military aid to Belfast *than a troop or two of horse, or part of a company of invalids*; and his excellency desires you will acquaint me by express whether a troop or two of horse can be properly accommodated in Belfast, so long as it may be proper to continue them in that town, in addition to the two troops now there. I have, etc.,

" RICHARD HERON."

This is but one of many communications which passed at the time between the Government and the authorities of Belfast. In most of them, the former express their satisfaction at the spirit of the volunteer companies then formed or about to be formed; with no sincerity, as we shall see presently.

It was evident, then, that the Government was in no condition to defend Ireland, if Ireland had really been menaced with invasion; and therefore quite as little in a condition to resist a great national military organization, no matter what form that might assume. In fact, after the example of Belfast, the whole country

now rushed to arms. It was a scene of wild and noble excitement. Crowds thronged the public places of resort, anxious and resolved; in every assembly of the people the topic was "defence of the country." On the 1st December, 1778, the people of Armagh entered into voluntary armed associations, and offered the command to Lord Charlemont. He at first refused; because, as lord-lieutenant of the country, he might at any time be called on to command the militia: but his lordship soon saw that volunteering was the irresistible order of the day; and that not to be a Volunteer would soon amount to being nobody at all in Ireland. Probably, also, he was influenced by the more powerful will and deeper sagacity of his friend Grattan; and in January, 1779, he assumed command of the Armagh Volunteers.

The fire of the people, and their anxiety to enter the ranks of the national army, may be judged from the fact, that in September, 1779, the return of the Volunteers in the counties of Antrim and Down, and in and near Coleraine, amounted to:

Total in the county of Down	2,241
Total in the county of Antrim	1,474
In and near Coleraine	210

3,925

Of these, the great majority were fully equipped and armed—and glittered in the gay uniform of the Volunteers. Some few companies were, however, unarmed, even up to a later period, until the pressure on Government compelled them to distribute the arms intended for the militia to worthier hands.

The uniforms of the Volunteers were very various, and of all the colours of the rainbow. The uniform of the Lawyer's corps was scarlet and blue, their motto, "*Pro aris et focis*"; the Attorney's regiment of Volunteers was scarlet and Pomona green; a corps called the Irish Brigade, and composed principally of Catholics (after the increasing liberality of the day had permitted them to become Volunteers), wore scarlet and white; other regiments of Irish Brigades wore scarlet faced with green, and their motto was "*Vox populi suprema lex est*"; the Goldsmith's corps, commanded by the Duke of Leinster, wore blue, faced with scarlet and a professional profusion of gold lace.

The "Irish Volunteers" were at first a Protestant organization exclusively. It was only by degrees and with extreme jealousy that its ranks were afterwards opened to those of the proscribed race. It might seem, indeed, that the Catholics would have been justified in taking no interest in the movement, and that they had little to hope from the change. They were not yet citizens, and if permitted to breathe in Ireland, it was by connivance, and against the law. Even the most zealous of the new Volunteers, who were now springing to arms for defence of Ireland, were, with some illustrious exceptions, *their* most determined and resolute foes. But, plunged in poverty and ignorance as they were, despoiled of rank, and arms, and votes, they yet seem to have felt instinctively that a movement for Irish independence, if successful, must end in their emancipation.

During all this time "the Castle" looked on in silent alarm. Even so late as May, 1779, when the Volunteer companies num-

bered probably twenty thousand men, the lord-lieutenant gravely considered whether it were still possible to disperse and disarm them by force.

But in the next month, the same viceroy communicates to the same Minister, that, by advice of the Privy Council of Ireland, he had supplied the Volunteers with part of the arms intended for the militia. This was really giving up the island into the hands of the Volunteers. The leaders of that force at once felt that they might do what they would with Ireland—for a time. After the delivery of the arms, the numbers of Volunteers rapidly and greatly increased.

But a spirit of great moderation reigned over the councils of this armed nation. It was, in the hands of those leaders, anything rather than a republican, or agrarian, or revolutionary movement. Thus, they adopted a system of officering their army, which gave a pledge that no anarchical idea had place in their thoughts. The soldiers elected their own commanders; and whom, says MacNevin, whom did they choose? "Whom did this democratic army select to rule their councils and direct their power? Not the low ambitious—not the village vulgar brawler—but the men who, by large possessions, lofty character, and better still, by virtue and by genius, had given to their names a larger patent than nobility. Flood and Grattan, Charlemont and Leinster—the chosen men in all the liberal professions—the orators who led the Patriot party in the House of Commons—the good, the high, the noble; these were the officers who held the unpurchased honours in the Volunteers. We may well look back, with mournful pride, through the horrid chaos where rebellion and national ruin rule the murky night, to this one hour of glory—of power uncorrupted, and opportunities unabused."

In the ranks of the Volunteers there were very many Catholics from a very early period of the movement; but they were there by *connivance*, as they were everywhere else. But in the next year, after meetings of Volunteers had passed resolutions in favour of Catholic rights, the young men of that religion began to swell the numbers of many corps. Some corps were composed altogether of Catholics: and when the Dungannon Convention came, the Volunteer army was at least 75,000 strong.

During the summer of 1779, an event occurred, which immensely stimulated the volunteering spirit:—the combined fleets of France and Spain entered the Channel in overwhelming force, which the British could not venture to encounter: the vessels passing between England and Ireland were placed under the protection of convoys; Paul Jones, with his little squadron, fought and captured, within sight of the English coast, the *Serapis*, man-of-war, and Scarborough frigate, with many vessels under their convoy; in short, there was another alarm of invasion, both in England and in Ireland. MacNevin, in his *History of the Volunteers*, says that this "was fortunate for the reputation of the Volunteers, for the purpose of establishing their fidelity to the *original principle* of their body," which principle was defence of the country against a foreign enemy.

CHAPTER III.

To force from reluctant England a Free Trade, and the repeal or rather declaratory nullification of Poyning's Law, which re-

quired the Irish Parliament to submit the heads of their bills to the English Privy Council before they could presume to pass them—these were, in few words, the two great objects which the leaders of the Volunteers kept now steadily before them. It must be here observed, that the idea and the term “free trade,” as then understood in Ireland, did not represent what the political economists now call free trade. What was sought, was a release from those restrictions on Irish trade imposed by an English Parliament, and for the profit of the English people. This did not mean that imports and exports should be free of all duty to the state, but only that the fact of import or export itself should not be restrained by foreign laws, and that the duties to be derived from it should be imposed by Ireland’s own Parliament, and in the sole interest of Ireland herself.

The first measure to convince England that Ireland was entitled to an unrestricted trade, was the “non-importation agreement,” which many of the Volunteer corps, as well as town corporations, solemnly adopted by resolutions, during the year 1779. Although there were frequent debates in the British Parliament this year on the subject of modifying the laws prohibiting the export of cottons, woollens, and provisions from Ireland, yet it was but too plain that the rapacious spirit of British commerce, and the menacing, almost frantic, opposition given to all consideration of such measure, by petitions, which sounded more like threats, coming from the great centres of trade in England, Manchester, Glasgow, Liverpool, and Bristol, would render all redress hopeless from that quarter. The non-importation agreements became popular, and the people of many towns and counties were steadily refusing to wear or use in their houses any kind of wares coming from England. The town of Galway had the honour of leading the way in this movement: the example was immediately followed by corps of Volunteers in many counties; and as the Volunteers were already the *fashion*, women sustained their patriotic resolution, and ladies of wealth began to clothe themselves exclusively in Irish fabrics. The resolutions are not uniform in their tenor. At a general meeting of the Freemen and Freeholders of the city of Dublin, convened by public notice, these resolutions were passed:

“*Resolved*, That the unjust, illiberal, and impolitic opposition given by many self-interested people of Great Britain to the proposed encouragement of the trade and commerce of this kingdom, originated in avarice and ingratitude.

“*Resolved*, That we will not, directly or indirectly, import or use any goods or wares, the produce or manufactures of Great Britain, which can be produced or manufactured in this kingdom, till an enlightened policy, founded on principles of justice, shall appear to actuate the inhabitants of certain manufacturing towns of Great Britain, who have taken so active a part in opposing the regulations proposed in favour of the trade of Ireland; and till they appear to entertain sentiments of respect and affection for their fellow-subjects of this kingdom.”

Shortly after the assizes at Waterford, the high sheriff, grand jury, and a number of most respectable inhabitants, assembled for the purpose of taking into consideration the ruinous state of the

trade and manufactures, and the alarming decline in the value of the staple commodities of the kingdom; and looking upon it as an indispensable duty that they owed their country and themselves, to restrain, by every means in their power, these growing evils, they passed and signed the following resolutions:

Resolved, That we, our families, and all whom we can influence, shall from this day wear and make use of the manufactures of this country, and this country only, until such time as all partial restrictions on our trade, imposed by the illiberal and contracted policy of our sister kingdom, be removed; but if, in consequence of this our resolution, the manufacturers (whose interest we have more immediately under consideration) should act fraudulently, or combine to impose upon the public; we shall hold ourselves no longer bound to countenance and support them.

Resolved, That we will not deal with any merchant or shop-keeper who shall, at any time hereafter, be detected in imposing any foreign manufacture as the manufacture of this country."

Resolutions of this kind became general; in consequence of which efforts the manufactures of Ireland began to revive, and the demand for British goods in a great measure decreased, a circumstance which tended to produce a disposition in Great Britain to attend to the complaints of that country, different indeed from that which Ireland had hitherto experienced.

The session of the Irish Parliament of 1779-80 had been looked forward to with profound interest; and it opened with stormy omens; The speech from the lord-lieutenant contained more than the usual quantity of inexplicit falsehood and diplomatic subterfuge. The address in reply was its echo, or would have been, but that Henry Grattan, he who was above all others, the *man* of his day, moved his celebrated amendment.

"That we beseech his Majesty to believe that it is with the utmost reluctance we presume to approach his royal person with even the smallest appearance of dissatisfaction; but that the distress of this kingdom is such as renders it an indispensable duty in us to lay the melancholy state of it before his Majesty, and to point out what we apprehend to be the only effectual means of relief; that the constant drain of its cash to supply absentees, and the fetters on its commerce, have always been sufficient to prevent this country from becoming opulent in its circumstances, but that those branches of trade which have hitherto enabled it to struggle with the difficulties it labours under, have now almost totally failed; that its commercial credit is sunk, all its resources are decaying rapidly, and numbers of its most industrious inhabitants in danger of perishing for want; that as long as they were able to flatter themselves that the progress of those evils might be stopped by their own efforts, they were unwilling to trouble his Majesty upon the subject of their distress; but, finding that they increase upon them, notwithstanding all their endeavours, they are at last obliged to have recourse to his Majesty's benignity and justice, and most humbly to acquaint him that, in their opinion, the only effectual remedy that can be applied to the sufferings of this kingdom, that can either invigorate its credit or support its people, it to open its ports for the exportation of all its manufactures; that it is evident to every unprejudiced mind that Great

Britain would derive as much benefit from this measure as Ireland itself, but that Ireland cannot subsist without it; and that it is with the utmost grief they find themselves under the necessity of again acquainting his Majesty that, unless some happy change in the state of its affairs takes place without delay, it must inevitably be reduced to remain a burden upon England, instead of increasing its resources, or affording the assistance which its natural affection for that country, and the intimate connection between their interests, have always inclined it to offer."

Hussey Burgh, the prime sergeant, one of the most eloquent and fascinating men of the day, an official of Government, a staunch supporter, one to whom, from the spirit of his office, patriotism should have been impossible, moved that "we beg to represent to his Majesty that it is not by temporary expedients, but by a *free trade alone*, that this nation is now to be saved from impending ruin." This resolution was carried unanimously; the supporters of Government saw that it was useless to oppose the spirit of the House; the nation was standing petitioner at their bar for the privileges of nature—production and consumption; the Volunteers were drawn up through the streets of Dublin, with an intelligible alternative hung round the necks of their cannon, "Free Trade or —;" and the amendment of Henry Grattan, with the improvements of Burgh, received on the part of the Patriots an exulting support, and on the part of the Ministers a fearful and angry assent. The day after this distinguished success, the addresses of the Lords and Commons were brought up to the Castle; the streets, from the House to the seat of government, were lined with the corps of the Dublin Volunteers, under arms, who paid military honours to the favourite leaders; the city was in a tumult of joy and triumph, contrasting not unfavourably with the gloom and irritation of the Castle. And that no doubt might be entertained of the authors of this important movement—that the merit of success should be laid at the right door, thanks to the Volunteers were moved and carried in the Lords and Commons. The motion in the House of Commons was made by Mr. Conolly, the head of the country gentlemen. The Duke of Leinster carried the motion through the Lords, with only one dissentient voice, Lord-Chancellor Lifford, one of those English lawyers who are sent over to Ireland, from time to time, to occupy the highest seats of justice and enjoy the largest emoluments in the country.

The question of the supplies came before the House on the 25th November, 1779. The Patriots had determined to withhold the grant, or to limit the duration of the money bill, until free trade was yielded by England. But Scott, the attorney-general, endeavoured to prove that supplies to pay the interest of the national debt, the tontine, and the loans, were not supplies to the crown, but for the discharge of national responsibilities. "How tender," said Grattan, "the administration is regarding the moneyed interests of individuals; how little they care to risk the ruin of the nation!" The attorney-general moved that the supplies should be granted for two years; Mr. French moved an amendment that they should be granted for six months.

The amendment was carried by 138 to 100; the triumph of the principles of free trade was insured; and the Minister acknow-

ledged the necessity of precipitately retracing his steps. Who can doubt the vast influence the Volunteers exerted in all these proceedings? On the preceding 4th of November—the anniversary of the birth of William the Third—the Volunteers had taken the opportunity of reading to the Minister and the Parliament a lesson of constitutional doctrine around the statue of him who was, they conceived, the founder of constitutional liberty. They assembled in College Green—the Dublin Volunteer artillery, commanded by James Napper Tandy, with labels bearing the inscription, “Free Trade or speedy revolution,” suspended on the necks of their cannon; the Volunteers of Dublin and the vicinity, under the orders of the Duke of Leinster. The sides of the pedestal on which stood the statue of the Deliverer, were ornamented with collections of most significant political reasoning; and under the angry eyes of the executive, such teachings as the following were given at once to the governors and the governed. On one side of the pillar was inscribed, “Relief to Ireland”; on another, “A short money bill, a free trade, or else—”; on a third, “The Volunteers, *quingenta millia juncti, parati pro patriâ mori*”; and in the front of the statue were two cannons bearing an inscription on each, “Free trade or this.” The people were assembled in thousands around the Volunteer troops, and their enthusiasm re-echoed in deafening applause the thunder of the artillery.

It was appointed for Lord North to undo the work of William the Third, and to take the first step towards restoring the trade to which the Deliverer had given the finishing blow. Lord North had great experience in obstinate oppression, and not less in the recognition of the liberties he had trampled upon. He had braved the genius of Chatham in the disastrous campaigns against transatlantic freedom—the world has read with profit the sequel of his history in that great transaction. He had opposed every effort to emancipate the trade of Ireland—it is an agreeable duty for an Irish writer to detail the concessions wrung from him by the arms of the Volunteers, and the eloquence and genius of those who led them to victory. On the 13th December, 1779, he introduced into the English legislature three propositions: to permit, first, the export of glass; second, the export of woollen goods; and third, a free trade with the English settlements in America, the West Indies, and Africa.

In connection with these propositions, Foster, the Speaker of the Irish House, and on that occasion the representative of Government, on the 20th of the same month, moved two resolutions in the Irish legislature. 1st, That the exportation of the manufactures of this country would tend to relieve her distresses. 2nd, That great commercial benefits would flow from the permission to trade with the American, Indian, and African settlements. Propositions of a very manifest truth, but tardily acknowledged by the English and Irish Governments, whose recognition is obviously attributable to a style of political reasoning which will prove anything that a nation of men requires to demonstrate. The propositions of Lord North, and the resolutions of Foster, were the basis of the bill which some months later gave a free trade to Ireland; and, for the first time since William the Third destroyed the woollen manufacture, and his English Parliament laid restrictions

on her productive industry, her people were free to use the resources a liberal nature offered them, and which a foreign tyrant sealed from their anxious hands. The efforts they had made hitherto to free their trade were the efforts of slaves—petition and remonstrance; it was not until they demanded free trade, with the Volunteer alternative, that England struck.

The Volunteers and the country had soon a more striking proof of the power which their attitude exerted over the obstinate maxims of English policy.

Lord North, in February, 1780, introduced his free trade bill in a speech which was the best refutation of his former arguments, and the severest condemnation of his former conduct.

The intelligence of the concessions made by that bill—liberty to export woollen manufactures, and to trade with the British colonies—was received with great joy by the people; but their joy was tempered with a wise care for the future, and the greater the conceded advantages were, the more did they feel themselves pressed by the insecurity of possession.

The commercial tyranny of England being now broken down, and the country obviously ripe for a further advance, Grattan fixed the 19th of April, 1780, as the day on which he would move his celebrated Declaration of Right, which, if adopted, would be a distinct *ultimatum* to England, and, adopted in the front of the Volunteer array, would be an unmistakable challenge and defiance. The scene presented on that memorable day by Dublin and the Irish Parliament House in College Green is vividly described by McNevin:

“No greater day, none of more glory ever arose upon this country, than that which dawned upon the Senate House of Ireland on the 19th of April, 1780. The dull chronicles of the time, and the meagre press which then represented popular opinion, are filled with the details of the circumstances under which Grattan brought forward his Declaration of Right. They were circumstances certainly unequalled in our history of military splendour and moral triumph. The streets around the Attic temple of legislations were thronged with the disciplined numbers of the Volunteers, and the impatient multitude of the people. The uniforms of the Irish army, the gaudy orange, the brilliant scarlet, and the chaster and more natural green—turned up with different facings, according to the tastes of the various corps—contrasted gaily with the dark background of the civilian mass that watched with eager eyes the extraordinary scene. Over the heads of the crowd floated the banners of the Volunteers, with the watchwords of freedom and political regeneration worked in gold or silver on a ground of blue, green or white. And truly the issue to be tried within the walls of the magnificent building was one great in its effects and illustrious from the character of the contending parties. It was a trial of right between two great nations—but more, it was to be either a precedent to freedom or an argument of usurpation. Much depended on the result, not alone as to the present interests, but as to the future destinies of the country; and the great men who were engaged in conducting this controversy of liberty were fully alive to the dignity of their parts, and fully competent to discharge the lofty mission they

had undertaken.

"Within the walls of the House of Commons, a scene of great interest presented itself to the eye. The galleries were thronged with women of the first fashion, beautiful, elegantly dressed, and filled with animate interest in the anticipated triumph of an eloquence to which the place was sacred. Scattered through the House were several officers of the Volunteers, for a considerable number of the members held commissions in that great body. But the chief attraction of the House were those distinguished men who were upon that day to make the noblest chapter in the history of Ireland—men celebrated beyond those of almost any age for the possession of the highest of man's qualities—eloquence, wit, statesmanship, political wisdom, and unbounded knowledge. There were to be seen and heard there that day the graceful and eloquent Burgh; the intrepid advocate, the consummate orator, the immaculate patriot, John Philpot Curran; the wise statesman, Flood; and the founder of Irish liberty, who watched it in its cradle, and who followed it to its grave, Grattan. Amongst the spectators were Lifford, the chancellor, whose voice had negatived every liberty, and denied every concession; Charlemont, the truest of patriots, but the worst of statesmen; and Frederick, the Earl of Bristol and the Bishop of Derry, whose coronet and mitre could not keep down the ambition of a tribune, nor conceal the finest qualities of a demagogue. All eyes were turned to Grattan.

"After a speech of consummate power, in which he imparted to the doctrines of freedom a more spiritual cast than they had yet assumed in Ireland, he moved his three resolutions. 1st, That his most excellent majesty, by and with the consent of the Lords and Commons of Ireland, are the only power competent to enact laws to bind Ireland. 2nd, That the crown of Ireland is, and ought to be, inseparably annexed to the crown of Great Britain. 3rd, That Great Britain and Ireland are inseparably united under one sovereign, by the common and indissoluble ties of interest, loyalty, and freedom."

CHAPTER IV.

The year 1780 was one of incessant organization; reviews took place throughout all Ireland; and a great provincial meeting was appointed for the November of that year, previous to which in all parts of the country the Volunteer corps were reviewed by the commanding officers in each district. The Earl of Belvidere reviewed the troops of Westmeath; the Limerick and Clare Volunteers were reviewed by Lord Kingsborough; the Londonderry by Lord Erne; the Volunteers of the South by Lord Shannon; those of Wicklow by Lord Kingsborough; and the Volunteers of Dublin county and city, who had formed themselves into associated corps, by Lord Carysfort, Sir Edward Newnham, and other men of rank, patriotism and fortune. These reviews were attended with every circumstance of brilliancy. There was no absence of the pomp of war. The Volunteers had supplied themselves with artillery, tents, and all the requisites of the field. They had received many presents of ordnance; numerous stands of colours had been presented to them, with no absence of ceremony and splendour, by

women of the highest station and figure in the country, whose pride it was to attend the reviews in their handsomest equipages, and clothed in their gayest attire.

Until the middle of the year 1780, the Volunteers had acted in independent troops and companies, only linked together by their community of feeling and design; but it was apparent that for any general movement, for any grand military measure (which every day seemed to render more imminent), they needed a closer organization and a commander-in-chief. Their choice fell upon James Caulfield, Earl of Charlemont, the descendant of one of the adventurers who had come over in Queen Elizabeth's reign, and had been rewarded for his exertions in helping to crush O'Neil by large grants of confiscated estates.

As commander-in-chief of the Volunteers, he made not only a dignified and ornamental standard-bearer, but a very active military organizer. He was great in reviews; and on the whole did his official duties well; but he never could expand his mind wide enough to grasp the idea of associating in the new nation the two millions of Catholics.

In replying to the address communicated to him his election as commander-in-chief, he states with so much clearness and perspicuity the position occupied by the Volunteers, the services they had rendered, and the spirit which animated them, that the reply is here presented in full as a perfect vindication of "that illustrious, adored, and abused body of men."

Gentlemen,—You have conferred on me an honour of a very new and distinguished nature,—to be appointed, without any solicitation on my part, the reviewing general of an independent army, *raised by no other call than that of public virtue*; an army which costs nothing to the State, and has produced everything to the nation, is what no other country has it in her power to bestow. Honoured by such a delegation, I obeyed it with cheerfulness. The inducement was irresistible; I felt it the duty of every subject to forget impediments which would have stood in the way of a similar attempt in any other cause.

I see with unspeakable pleasure the progress of your discipline, and the increase of your associations; the indefatigable, steady, and extraordinary exertions, to which I have been a witness, afford a sufficient proof, that, in the formation of an army, public spirit, a shame of being outdone, and the ambition to excel, *will supply the place of reward and punishment—can levy an army, and bring it to perfection.*

The pleasure I feel is increased, when I reflect that your associations are not the fashion of a day, but the settled purpose and durable principle of the people; from whence I foresee, that the advantages lately acquired will be ascertained and established, and that solid and permanent strength will be added to the empire.

I entirely agree in the sentiment you express with regard to the exclusive authority of the legislation of this kingdom. I agree also in the expediency of making the assertion; it is no more than the law will warrant, and the real friends of both nations subscribe.

I have the honour to be, Gentlemen,

Your most obliged, faithful, and obedient humble servant,
July 15th, 1780

CHARLEMONT.

The provincial reviews which followed the election of Lord Charlemont were intended to convey significantly to the minister the readiness of an armed nation to second the propositions of their leaders in Parliament. Lord Charlemont visited Belfast to review the Ulster regiments, and was attended by Sir Annesley Stewart and Grattan as his aides. He was met at Hillsborough by Mr. Dobbs, Mr. Hamilton, and Mr. Stewart, afterwards the Marquis of Londonderry. His arrival at Belfast on the 11th of July was announced by a salute of seven guns from the artillery, which was answered by the ships in the harbour; and there followed a brilliant review of three thousand men.

There is small interest in following the details of parliamentary business during the first year of Lord Carlisle's vice-royalty; because it was every day more evident that the power which would decide the destinies of the country lay outside the walls of Parliament. Indeed, on the discussion of the Perpetual Mutiny Bill for Ireland, Grattan had declared that if it passed into law, he would secede, and appeal to the people; a formidable threat at a moment when the people were in such a good condition to hear and decide such an appeal.

On the 9th of October, 1781, the Earl of Carlisle met the Parliament. There was the usual commonplace speech recommending the Protestant Charter Schools; the linen trade; assuring Parliament of his majesty's ardent wishes for the happiness, etc., of the Irish people, and even speaking complacently of the "spirited offers of assistance" which had lately been made to the Government from every part of the kingdom, which was, though without naming them, a kind of compliment to the Volunteers.

On the 10th of October, 1781, Mr. Bradstreet, the recorder, a very staunch Patriot, moved in the House of Commons for leave to bring in the heads of a *Habeas Corpus* bill, prefacing his motion by observing that the liberty and safety of the subjects of Ireland were insecure until a *Habeas Corpus* act should take place; that arbitrary power had made great strides and innovations on public liberty; but was effectually restrained by that law which had its full operation in England, but did not exist in Ireland. It was, he said, the opinion of a great and learned judge, that this law was the grand bulwark of the constitution. Leave was granted; and Mr. Yelverton and the recorder were ordered to prepare and bring in the same.

The very next day an important bill was moved for. Ireland had never yet enjoyed the protection of a *Habeas Corpus* act; nor, indeed, has she ever enjoyed it until this day, because that law has been regularly suspended in Ireland precisely at the times when it was most needed.

In this session, also, Mr. Grattan made an *exposé* of the financial position of the country. This speech led to no action, but it is worth some attention, because it shows to what a hopeless state of embarrassment, or rather, national ruin, Ireland had been reduced. As usual, Grattan spoke with bold and bitter personal allusion, careless of the fact that perhaps the majority of his auditors were themselves corrupt pensioners on the public treasury. "Your debt," said he, "including annuities, is £2,667,600; of this debt in the last fourteen years, you have borrowed above

£1,900,000, in the last eight years above £1,500,000, and in the last two years, £910,090. I state not only the fact of your debt, but the progress of your accumulation, to show the rapid mortality of your distemper, the accelerated velocity with which you advance to ruin; and if the question stood alone on this ground, it would stand firm; for I must further observe, that if this enormous debt be the debt of the peace establishment, not accumulated by directing the artillery of your arms against a foreign enemy, but by directing the artillery of your treasury against your constitution, it is a debt of patronage and prostitution."

He next went into an account of the revenues and expenditures of the kingdom; showed that the increase of expenses for two years amounted to £550,000, while the increase of revenue for the same two years was but £60,000; and that this profligate system was only confirmed and aggravated each succeeding year. Then he proceeded—"I have stated your expenses as exceeding your income £484,000, and as having increased in fourteen years above half a million. As to the application of your money, I am ashamed to state it; let the minister defend it; let him defend the scandal of giving pensions, directly or indirectly, to the first of the nobility, with as little honour to them who receive, as to the King who gives. Let him defend the minute corruption which in small bribes and annuities leaves honourable gentlemen poor, while it makes them dependent."

On the 11th of December, Mr. Flood, who was anxious that he also should be on the record prominently against the obnoxious Poynings' Law, brought forward a motion for the appointment of a committee "to explain the Law of Poynings'." He made a learned and statesmanlike speech, was answered by a Court member; and his motion was voted down by 139 against 67.

This same session an effort was made by Mr. Luke Gardiner (afterwards Lord Mountjoy) to procure a measure of relief for the Catholics. This gentleman, like Lord Charlemont, had lately returned from a residence in Europe; and had often lamented since his return that Ireland, he was ashamed to confess, was the most intolerant country, Catholic or Protestant, in all the world. On the 13th of December he gave notice of his intention to bring in the heads of a bill for some mitigation of the penal laws. A few days after, when Mr. Gardiner introduced the subject again, Grattan warmly and eagerly gave his support in advance to some large and just measure, including both Catholics and Dissenters, declaring emphatically that "it should be the business of Parliament to unite every denomination of Irishmen in brotherly affection and regard to the constitution." Every denomination of Irishmen! Including Catholics! It was new language in that House: it was the first time perhaps, since King James's Parliament, that there had been so much of a hint of treating Catholics and Protestant as on an equal footing before the law. No wonder that it disquieted Cromwellian squires. Sir Richard Johnson nervously protested at once "that he would oppose any bill by which Papists were permitted to *bear arms*."

That Henry Grattan's idea, though not then fully developed, did go the full length of an absolute equality, may be inferred from a remarkable passage in the end of his short speech. "It had

been well observed by a gentleman of first-rate understanding (a member of the British Parliament), that Ireland could never prosper till its inhabitants were a people; and though the assertion might seem strange, that three millions of inhabitants in that island should not be called a people, yet the truth was so, and so would continue until the wisdom of Parliament should unite them by all the bonds of social affection. Then, and not till then, the country might hope to prosper."

This bill of Mr. Gardiner, which was very cautious and modest, merely relaxing a little further the rigours of the laws which debarred Catholics from having property and from educating their children, was postponed from week to week, and was still pending when the great event of the century (for Ireland) took place in the parish church of Dungannon, in the county of Tyrone..

But the cause of the country was now removed into another and a higher court than that of the corrupt Parliament. All the year 1781 had been a time of active organization for the Volunteers; the companies had been formed into regiments, many thousands of Catholics were now gathered into the organization; numerous reviews continued to be held; and it was determined that the regiments should now be brigaded. On the 28th of December, 1781, the officers and delegates of the First Ulster regiment, commanded by Lord Charlemont, met at Armagh, and resolved to hold a *Convention* of the Ulster delegates at Dungannon. It was the idea of Grattan: he had failed in his endeavour to join issue with England by his Declaration of Right in Parliament, and resolved now to put himself upon the country. The Castle, on its side, hoped that this armed Convention would put itself in the wrong by some intemperate violence or plain illegality. In fact, the language of the resolutions passed at the preliminary meeting in Armagh was startling.

"*Resolved*, That with the utmost concern we behold the little attention paid to the constitutional rights of the kingdom, by the majority of those whose duty it is to establish and preserve the same.

"*Resolved*, That to avert the impending danger from the nation, and to restore the constitution to its original purity, the most vigorous and effective methods must be pursued to root out corruption and Court influence from the legislative body.

"*Resolved*, That to open a path towards the attaining of this desirable point, it is absolutely requisite that a meeting be held in the most central town of the province of Ulster, which we conceive to be Dungannon, to which said meeting every Volunteer association of the said province is most earnestly requested to send delegates, then and there to deliberate on the present alarming situation of public affairs, and to determine on, and publish to their country, what may be the result of said meeting.

"*Resolved*, That as many real and lasting advantages may arise to this kingdom from said intended meeting being held before the present session of Parliament is much further advanced, Friday, the 15th day of February next, at ten o'clock in the forenoon is hereby appointed for said meeting, at Dungannon, as aforesaid."

The little town had no assembly room capable of accomodating the meeting; and it was determined to use the parish church for

that purpose. On the 15th of February, from every town of Ulster the delegates met. They represented thirty thousand armed men; and felt that they had full power and credentials to deliberate and decide for a great army, not only for the Ulster Volunteers, but for those of all Ireland.

Of the resolutions prepared for the adoption of the military delegates, the first was written by Grattan, and the second by Flood. Mr. Dobbs of Carrickfergus was just about to start for the Convention, when Grattan, the unchanging friend of the Catholics, thrust into his hand the resolution in their favour, which afterwards passed at Dungannon, with only two dissenting voices of benighted Protestants.

On the memorable 15th of February, 1782, "the church of Dungannon was full to the door." The representatives of the regiments of Ulster—one hundred and forty-three corps—marched to the sacred place of meeting, two and two, dressed in various uniforms and fully armed. Deeply they felt the great responsibilities which had been committed to their prudence and courage; but they were equal to their task, and had not lightly pledged their faith to a trustful country. The aspect of the church, the temple of religion, in which, nevertheless, no grander ceremony was ever performed, was imposing, or it may be said, sublime. Never, on that hill where ancient piety had fixed its seat, was a nobler offering made to God than this, when two hundred of the elected warriors of the people assembled in His tabernacle, to lay the deep foundations of a nation's liberty. Colonel Irwin, a gentleman of rank, a man firm and cautious, of undoubted courage but great prudence, presided as chairman. The following resolutions were then passed:—

"Whereas, it has been asserted that Volunteers, as such, cannot with propriety debate or publish their opinions on political subjects, or on the conduct of Parliament or political men.

"Resolved, unanimously, That a citizen by learning the use of arms does not abandon any of his civil rights.

"Resolved, unanimously, That a claim of any body of men, other than the King, Lords and Commons of Ireland, to make laws to bind this kingdom, is unconstitutional, illegal, and a grievance.

"Resolved, with one dissenting voice only, That the powers exercised by the privy councils of both kingdoms, under, or under colour or pretence of, the law of Poynings', are unconstitutional, and a grievance.

"Resolved, unanimously, That the ports of this country are by rights open to all foreign countries not at war with the King; and that any burden thereupon, or obstruction thereto, save only by the Parliament of Ireland, are unconstitutional, illegal, and a grievance.

"Resolved, with one dissenting voice only, That a Mutiny Bill not limited in point of duration from session to session, is unconstitutional, and a grievance.

"Resolved, unanimously, That the independence of judges is equally essential to the administration of justice in Ireland as in England, and that the refusal or delay of this right to Ireland, makes a distinction where there should be no distinction, may ex-

cite jealousy where perfect union should prevail, and is in itself unconstitutional and a grievance.

“Resolved, with eleven dissenting voices only, That it is our decided and unalterable determination to seek a redress of these grievances, and we pledge ourselves to each other and our country, as freeholders, fellow-citizens, and men of honour, that we will, at every ensuing election, support those only who have supported and will support us therein, and that will use all constitutional means to make such our pursuit of redress speedy and effectual.

“Resolved, with one dissenting voice only, That the right honourable and honourable the minority in Parliament, who have supported these our constitutional rights, are entitled to our most grateful thanks, and that the annexed address be signed by the chairman, and published with these resolutions.

“Resolved, unanimously, That four members from each county from the province of Ulster, eleven to be a quorum, be and are hereby appointed a committee, till the next general meeting, to act for the Volunteer corps here represented, and, as occasion shall require, to call general meetings of the province, viz. :—

Lord Visct. Enniskillen,	Major Charles Duffen,
Col. Mervyn Archdall,	Capt. John Harvey,
Col. William Irvine,	Capt. Robert Campbell,
Col. Robert M'Clintock,	Capt. Joseph Pollock,
Col. John Ferguson,	Capt. Waddell Cunningham,
Col. John Montgomery,	Capt. Francis Evans,
Col. Charles Leslie,	Capt. John Cope,
Col. Francis Lucas,	Capt. James Dawson,
Col. Thos. M. Jones,	Capt. James Acheson,
Col. James Hamilton,	Capt. Daniel Eccles,
Col. Andrew Thomson,	Capt. Thomas Dickson,
Lieut.-Col. C. Nesbitt,	Capt. David Bell,
Lieut.-Col. A. Stewart,	Capt. John Coulson,
Major James Patterson,	Capt. Robert Black,
Major Francis Dobbs,	Rev. Wm. Crawford,
Major James M'Clintock,	Mr. Robert Thomson.

“Resolved, unanimously, That said committee do appoint nine of their members to be a committee in Dublin, in order to communicate with such other Volunteer associations in the other provinces as may think proper to come to similar resolutions, and to deliberate with them on the most constitutional means of carrying them into effect.

“In consequence of the above resolutions, the committee have appointed the following gentlemen for said committee, three to be a quorum, viz. :—

Col. Mervyn Archdall,	Major Francis Dobbs,
Col. William Irvine,	Capt. Francis Evans,
Col. John Montgomery,	Capt. James Dawson,
Col. Thomas M. Jones,	Capt. Joseph Pollock,

Mr. Robert Thomson.

“Resolved, unanimously, That the committee be, and are hereby instructed to call a general meeting of the province, within twelve months from this day, or in fourteen days after the dissolution of the present Parliament, should such an event sooner take place.

“Resolved, unanimously, That the Court of Portugal has acted towards this kingdom, being a part of the British Empire, in such a manner, as to call upon us to pledge ourselves to each other, that we will not consume any wine of the growth of Portugal, and that we will, to the extent of our influence, prevent the use of said wine, save and except the wine at present in this kingdom, until such time as our exports shall be received in the kingdom of Portugal, as the manufactures of part of the British Empire.”

“Resolved, with two dissenting voices only to this and the following resolution, That we hold the right of private judgment in matters of religion to be equally sacred in others as ourselves.”

“Resolved, therefore, That as men and as Irishmen, as Christians and as Protestants, we rejoice in the relaxation of penal laws against our Roman Catholic fellow-subjects, and that we conceive the measure to be fraught with the happiest consequences to the union and prosperity of the inhabitants of Ireland.”

Some formal resolutions followed of thanks to Lord Charlemont, to Colonel Dawson; who had been active in getting up the Convention, and to Colonel Irwin. The meeting terminated by the adoption of an address to the Patriot minorities in the Lords and Commons, remarkable for its comprehensive brevity and admirable succinct eloquence:—

“My Lords and Gentlemen,—We thank you for your noble and spirited, though hitherto ineffectual efforts, in defence of the great constitutional and commercial rights of your country. Go on. The almost unanimous voice of the people is with you; and in a free country the voice of the people must prevail. We know our duty to our Sovereign, and are loyal. We know our duty to ourselves, and are resolved to be free. We seek for our rights, and no more than our rights; and, in so just a pursuit, we should doubt the being of a Providence if we doubted of success.”

“Signed by order,

WILLIAM IRVINE, Chairman.”

Such were the proceedings at Dungannon. All Ireland adopted the resolutions; and meetings were held in every county formally to accept the exposition of the public mind which the Volunteers of Ulster had given. The freeholders of each county, and the grand juries adopted the resolutions.

The delegates of Connaught met in pursuance of the requisition of Lord Clanricarde; the delegates of Munster assembled at Cork under the presidency of Lord Kingsborough, and the delegates of Leinster at Dublin under that of Colonel Henry Flood.

It was in vain that the Government renewed its old cabals, or made overt resistance to the progress of the Dungannon movement. The example of the North was followed in every quarter. And what is peculiarly worthy of notice in the history of the day is this, that there was no diversity of opinion amongst the armed battalions in the different parts of the country. Such division of opinion, especially on the subject of the Catholics, might naturally have been expected; but the result was one of greater and singular unanimity on the important topics which agitated the public mind. The Dungannon resolutions constitute the charter of Irish freedom, embracing all the points necessary for

the perfect independence of the country, legislative freedom, control over the army, religious equality, and freedom of trade. They are the summary of the political requisitions of the Patriot party in the Parliament for which they had been struggling since the days of Molyneux, for which it was in vain to struggle until an armed force was ready to take the field on their behalf. And no one can read the history of this great Convention without feeling that it was virtually a declaration of war, with the alternative of a full concession of all the points of the charter of liberty. The Dungannon delegates were empowered by the nation, speaking through her armed citizens, to make terms or to enforce her rights; a hundred thousand swords were ready to obey their commands. England could not have brought into the field one-half that number; and the rights of Ireland were virtually declared on the 15th of February. It was a marvellous moderation which contented itself with constitutional liberty in a political connection with England, and subjection to her monarch; it would not have required another regiment to have struck off the last link of subjugation and to have established the national liberty of Ireland on a wider basis than any upon which it ever stood.

Mr. Gardiner's Catholic Relief Bill was introduced on the 15th of February, the same day on which the Dungannon Convention met in the church of Dungannon. Fitzgibbon, afterwards Lord Clare, endeavoured to defeat the measure by suggesting that it repealed the act of settlement, and disturbed Protestant titles. A good deal of alarm was created by his opinion, and time was taken to inquire into its soundness. On examination it was considered bad, and the House went into committee on the bill on the 20th of February, 1782. The measure proposed to concede to the Catholics, 1st, the enjoyment of property; 2dly, the free exercise of their religion; 3dly, the rights of education; 4thly, of marriage; and 5thly, of carrying arms. Flood supported the bill, but ungraciously laboured to establish a distinction between the rights of property and the rights of power. He said, "Though I would extend toleration to Roman Catholics, yet I would not wish to make a change in the state or enfeeble the Government." Mr. Gardiner, replying to his objection, that if this bill should pass, there would no longer be any *restraint* on Roman Catholics, said—"But was it not a restraint upon a man that he could hold no trust nor office in the state? That he could not be a member of Parliament, a justice, or a grand-juror? That he could not serve in the army of his country, have a place in the revenue, be an advocate or attorney, or even become a freeman of the smallest corporation? If gentlemen laboured under these capacities themselves, would they think them no restraint?" Fitzgibbon, who had endeavoured to defeat the measure at first, on the ground that it would disturb Protestant titles, now supported it, saying, that "though it would be improper to allow Papists to become proprietors of boroughs, there was no good reason why they should not possess estates in counties, nor why Protestant tenants holding under them should not enjoy a right of voting for members of Parliament." There was no question in this bill of allowing them to vote themselves, still less of allowing them to be members of Parliament. The Attorney-General, Sir Hercules Langrishe, Sir

Henry Cavendish, Mr. Ogle, the Provost, Mr. Walsh, Mr. Daly, Sir Boyle Roche, and Mr. Bagnal spoke warmly for the bill. In the course of the several debates upon these measures of Mr. Gardiner, there were many objectors to each clause, and their objections rested on diverse grounds. Mr. Flood's vehement opposition to giving the Catholics any rights which might gradually invest them with political power was sustained by Mr. Montgomery, Mr. Warburton, Mr. Rowley, Mr. John Burke, and Mr. St. George. Many members, to their immortal honour, expressed themselves plainly and unreservedly as in favour of wiping off the whole Penal Code at once, not only in justice to the Catholics, but for the benefit of the whole country. Amongst these we find the names of Sir Lucius O'Brien, Mr. Forbes, Mr. Hussey Burgh, Mr. Yelverton, Mr. Dillon, Captain Hall, and Mr. Mossom. The clause permitting Catholics to go abroad for education was strenuously resisted by Fitzgibbon, Mason, Bushe, and others. It is needless to say that Mr. Grattan supported all the bills, and all their clauses. Indeed the debates are chiefly interesting because they were the occasion of the enunciation by him, for the first time, of the grand and generous thought of a true Irish nationality. He said—"I object to any delay which can be given to this clause; we have already considered the subject on a larger scale, and this is but part of what the clauses originally contained. We have before us the example of England, who, four years ago, granted Catholics a right of taking land in fee; the question is merely, whether we shall give this right or not, and if we shall give it, whether it shall be accompanied by all its natural advantages? Three years ago, when this question was debated in this House, there was a majority of three against granting Roman Catholics estates in fee, and they were only allowed to take leases for 999 years. The argument then used against granting them the fee was, that they might influence elections. It has this day been shown that they may have as effectual an influence by possessing leases of 999 years, as they can have by possessing the fee; at that time, I do declare, I was somewhat prejudiced against granting Roman Catholics estates in fee, but their conduct since that period has fully convinced me of their true attachment to this country. When this country had resolved no longer to crouch beneath the burden of oppression that England had laid upon her; when she armed in defence of her rights, and a high-spirited people demanded a free trade, did the Roman Catholics desert their fellow-countrymen? No; they were found among the foremost. When it was afterwards thought necessary to assert a free constitution, the Roman Catholics displayed their public virtue; they did not endeavour to take advantage of your situation; they did not endeavour to make terms for themselves, but they entered frankly and heartily into the cause of the country; judging by their own virtue, that they might depend upon your generosity for their reward. But now, after you have obtained a free trade, after the voice of the nation has asserted her independence, they approach this House as humble suppliants, and beg to be admitted to the common rights of men. Upon the occasions I have mentioned, I did carefully observe their actions, and did then determine to support their cause if ever

it came before the House, and to bear a strong testimony of the constitutional principles of the Catholic body. Nor should it be mentioned as a reproach to them that they fought under the banner of King James, when we recollect that before they entered the field, they extorted from him a Magna Charta—a British constitution. In 1779, when the fleets of Bourbon hovered on our coasts, and the Irish nation roused herself to arms, did the Roman Catholics stand aloof? Or did they, as might be expected from their oppressed situation, offer assistance to the enemy? No: they poured in subscriptions for the service of their country, or they pressed into the ranks of her glorious Volunteers.

“It has been shown that this clause grants the Roman Catholics no new power in the state; every argument, therefore, which goes against this clause goes against their having leases for 999 years, every argument which goes against their having leases for 999 years, goes against their having any leases at all; and every argument which goes against them having property, goes against their having existence in this land. The question is now, whether we shall grant Roman Catholics a power of enjoying estates, or whether we shall be a Protestant settlement or an Irish nation? Whether we shall throw open the gates of the temple of liberty to all our countrymen, or whether we shall confine them in bondage by penal laws? So long as the Penal Code remains, we never can be a great nation; the Penal Code is the shell in which the Protestant power has been hatched, and now it is become a bird, it must burst its shell asunder, or perish in it. I give my consent to the clause in its principle, extent, and boldness, and give my consent to it as the most likely means of obtaining a victory over the prejudices of the Catholics, and over our own. I give my consent to it, because I would not keep two millions of my fellow-subjects in a state of slavery; and because, as the mover of the Declaration of Rights, I should be ashamed of giving freedom to but six hundred thousand of my countrymen, when I could extend it to two millions more.”

The relief measures of Mr. Gardiner were contained in three separate bills, very cautiously and moderately prepared, in order to avoid too rude a shock to the Protestant Ascendancy. To read these bills with their restrictions and exceptions, gives a vivid idea of what Protestant Ascendancy in Ireland then was. The first enables Catholics to take and hold, in the same manner as Protestants, any lands and hereditaments except advowsons, manors, and boroughs returning members to Parliament. It removes several penalties from such of the clergy as should have taken the oath and been registered; it confines its operation to the regular clergy then within that kingdom (by which the succession of other regulars from abroad might be prevented), it deprives any clergyman officiating in a church or chapel with a steeple or bell of the benefit of the act, and repeals several of the most obnoxious parts of the acts of Anne and Geo. I. and Geo. II.

The second of the series of measures related to education—“An act to allow persons professing the Popish religion to teach schools, and for regulating the education of Papists,” etc. It repeals certain parts of the acts of William and Anne, which inflicted on any Catholic teaching school, or pri-

vately instructing youth in learning, the same pains, penalties, and forfeitures as any Popish regular clergyman was subjected to (transportation, and in case of return, death), but excepts out of its benefits, those who should not have taken the oath of allegiance, who should receive a Protestant scholar, or who should become ushers under Protestant schoolmasters. The act also enables Catholics (except ecclesiastics) to be guardians to their own or any other Popish child. These two first bills passed, and became law.

The third bill was for permitting intermarriages between Protestants and Papists: but the liberality of the House had not yet arrived at such a revolutionary point, they felt they must draw the line somewhere; so they threw out this bill by a majority of eight.

In the course of this same eventful February, Grattan brought on a new motion for an address to the King declaring the rights of Ireland. But within that corrupted atmosphere, upon those bribed benches, was the very worst place for liberty to breathe.

The time had not yet arrived, though it was near at hand, for the Irish Parliament to assent to the proposition of its own freedom. They started back reluctant from the glowing form of Liberty; not even with a nation in arms behind them, and with a man of the inspired eloquence of Grattan amongst their sordid ranks, could *their* valour and *his* genius triumph over the inveterate corruption and servility of that House. Grattan's motion was lost by a majority of 137 to 68.

On the 9th of April, Fox communicated to the House of Commons in England, the following message from the King:—

“George R., his majesty, being concerned to find that discontent and jealousies are prevailing among his royal subjects in Ireland upon matters of great weight and importance, earnestly recommends to this House to take the same into their most serious consideration, in order to such a final adjustment as may give mutual satisfaction to both kingdoms: G.R.”

A similar communication was made to the Irish Parliament by John Hely Hutchinson, principal secretary of state in Ireland, who, at the same time stated that he had uniformly maintained the right of Ireland to independent and exclusive legislation, and declared that he would give his earnest support by any assertion of that right, whether by vote of the House, by address, or by enactment.

A scene of still greater excitement and interest occurred on this occasion, and that which has so carried away the citizens of Dublin two years before, when Grattan first introduced the question of Irish rights. The nation had become strong and confident by success—they had achieved free trade—their military organization had attained the greatest perfection of discipline and skill—their progress was, indeed, triumphant, they had but one short step to take. There was, therefore, great excitement through Ireland as to the issue of Grattan's Declaration of Right, not that they apprehended failure, but that they felt anxious to see the realization of their splendid hopes. The streets of Dublin were lined with the Volunteers—the House of Commons was a great centre, round which all the city appeared moving. Inside, rank

and fashion and genius were assembled; outside, arms were glistening and drums sounding. It was the commencement of a new government, and the king had sent a message of peace to Ireland.

The message was similar to that delivered to the English House, and when it had been read, Mr. George Ponsonby moved that an address should be presented, which might mean anything, and meant nothing. It was to tell his majesty that the House was thankful for a gracious message, and that it would take into its serious consideration the discontents and jealousies which had arisen in Ireland, the causes of which should be investigated with all convenient dispatch, and be submitted to the royal justice and wisdom of his majesty.

When this motion, very full of the solemn plausibilities of loyalty and the generalities of pretended patriotism, was made, Henry Grattan rose to move his amendment. It was a moment of great interest. The success of the motion was certain, but all parties were anxious to learn the extent of the demands which Grattan was about to make. As the "herald and oracle of his armed countrymen" he moved the amendment which contained the rights of Ireland; and confident of its success, he apostrophised his country as already free, and appealed to the memory of those great men who had first taught the doctrine of liberty which his nobler genius had realised. He moved:

"That a humble address be presented to his majesty, to return his majesty the thanks of the House for his most gracious message to this House, signified by his grace the lord-lieutenant.

"To assure his majesty of our unshaken attachment to his majesty's person and government, and of our lively sense of his paternal care in thus taking the lead to administer content to his majesty's subjects of Ireland.

"That, thus encouraged by his royal interposition, we shall beg leave, with all duty and affection, to lay before his majesty the causes of our discontents and jealousies. To assure his majesty that his subjects of Ireland are a free people. That the crown of Ireland is an imperial crown inseparably annexed to the crown of Great Britain, on which connection the interests and happiness of both nations essentially depend; but that the kingdom of Ireland is a distinct kingdom, with a Parliament of her own—the sole legislature thereof. That there is no body of men competent to make laws to bind this nation except the King, Lords and Commons, of Ireland; nor any other Parliament which hath any authority or power of any sort whatsoever in this country save only the Parliament of Ireland. To assure his majesty, that we humbly conceive that in this right the very essence of our liberties exists; a right which we, on the part of all the people of Ireland, do claim as their birthright, and which we cannot yield but with our lives.

"To assure his majesty, that we have seen with concern certain claims advanced by the Parliament of Great Britain, in an act entitled 'An act for the better securing the dependency of Ireland:' an act containing matter entirely irreconcilable to the fundamental rights of this nation. That we conceive this act, and the claims it advances, to be the great and principal cause of the

discontents and jealousies in this kingdom.

"To assure his majesty, that his majesty's Commons of Ireland do most sincerely wish that all bills which become law in Ireland should receive the approbation of his majesty under the seal of Great Britain; but that yet we do consider the practice of suppressing our bills in the council of Ireland, or altering the same anywhere, to be another just cause for discontent and jealousy.

"To assure his majesty that an act, entitled 'An Act for the better accommodation of his majesty's forces,' being unlimited in duration, and defective in other instances, but passed in that shape from the particular circumstances of the times, is another just cause of discontent and jealousy in this kingdom.

"That we have submitted these, the principle causes of the present discontent and jealousy of Ireland, and remain in humble expectation of redress."

The address was carried unanimously in both Houses, and Parliament took a short recess, to allow for the matter to be dealt with in England. Nobody either in Ireland or England doubted the issue. It was quite certain that the declaration of the Irish Parliament was all-sufficient to establish the liberty of the country.

On the 17th of May, simultaneously in the two Houses at Westminster, Lord Shelburne in the Lords and Mr. Fox in the Commons, having read the addresses of the Irish Parliament, moved—"That it was the opinion of that House that the act of the 6th Geo. I., entitled '*An Act for the better securing the dependency of Ireland upon the Crown of Great Britain*,' ought to be repealed."

On the 27th of May, the Duke of Portland officially communicated to the Irish Parliament this great and memorable concession, which, he said, came from "the magnanimity of the King and the wisdom of the Parliament;" closing his message with these words: "On my own part I entertain not the least doubt but that the same spirit which urged you to share the freedom of Great Britain will confirm you in your determination to share her fate also, standing or falling with the British nation."

"Poynings' Law" was still on the statute book; and the work of enfranchisement was not complete until it was repealed; as it was an Irish statute, it was the Irish Parliament which had to repeal it; and this was immediately done on motion of Mr. Yelverton. Grattan introduced a bill "to punish mutiny and desertion," which repealed the perpetual mutiny act, and restored to Parliament a due control over the army; also another bill to reverse erroneous judgments and decrees, a measure which was supposed at the time to have settled the question of the final judicature of Ireland, and to have taken from the English Lords and King's Bench their usurped appellate jurisdiction.

At the same time that the legislature was thus taking securities and guarantees (as it was thought) for permanent independence, it was not forgetful of the honourable debt due to the man who, above all others, had conduced to restore the dignity and independence of Ireland. Fifty thousand pounds were voted to Henry Grattan, his friends having declined for him the larger tribute of £100,000 as at first proposed, and having also refused an in-

been made by Mr. Conolly on the part of the Government.

Ireland was now, at least formally and technically, an independent nation.

* * * * *

The whole history of attempted Government of Ireland by British legislators bristles with false steps based on an utter want of appreciation of the Irish temperament—The Bogey of Separation looms large in the average British mind, and repressive measures are taken that create the very evils they dread.

Throughout the history of the Volunteer movement there was no suggestion of disloyalty to the Throne. It was not a Separatist movement, but was a great revolt against class repression that had brought Ireland to the verge of commercial ruin.

Even to-day does England realise that the Irish Parliamentary Party is not a Separatist Party, but has done more to create a real union between England and Ireland than any force previously known in Irish history?

Government by consent of the Governed!

Why not try it in Ireland?

"Should Irishmen be conscripted?" is still the burning question, and in the previous pages I have shown Young Ireland how reforms were gained in the past.

England and the Empire are now in the melting pot, and when Peace is proclaimed, and our war-worn soldiers return, will they be deluded by the old prejudices and shibboleths? Have they not learned in the democracy of the battlefield that men have rights, and have they not also learnt that they possess the power to enforce these rights?

I would answer the question "Should Irishmen be conscripted?" by another; "Should Conscription be necessary?" Should not the golden opportunity to learn be grasped?

Englishmen! Abolish the so-called Union that has been the cause of so much misery and misunderstanding. That has caused Ireland to be for generations the sport of your politicians, and caused Irish politicians, in retaliation, to make Home Rule for England difficult and at times impossible.

Away with the cursed thing! Your daily newspapers report gibes from every quarter of the earth when your politicians speak about your great fight for Liberty; and the gibe is, "How about Ireland?"

Irishmen! Cultivate a real Union for the prosperity of our beloved country. Your forefathers united in 1782 to fight a common enemy.

It should not be so difficult now to unite for the good of Ireland. Try it!



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